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ABSTRACT

This report describes efforts by Achieve, Inc. to raise standards and reduce the achievement gap. In 2001, Achieve expanded its efforts to benchmark standards and accountability policies across the states, focusing on three states at the forefront of standards based reform (Maryland, Massachusetts, and Texas), while continuing to examine the quality and alignment of standards and tests. The report focuses on the following: state progress on higher academic standards (e.g., national mathematics performance improved substantially during the 1990s, and the public is behind the agenda of standards, assessment, and accountability); comparing standards to the best in states and other nations (examining policy impact, standards and assessment, and making diplomas matter); states working together to raise achievement (e.g., the Mathematics Achievement Partnership); Achieve's standards database; and Achieve's provision of public leadership to help sustain the movement to raise standards and achievement (e.g., the 2001 National Education Summit, efforts to provide public leadership and advocacy, and national forums). (SM)

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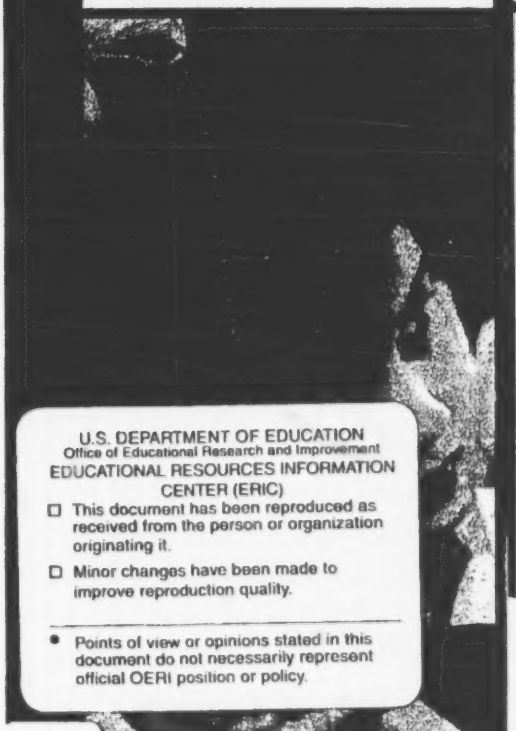
ED 471 696

2001 ANNUAL REPORT

Raising the Bar, Closing the Gap



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Achieve, Inc.

Achieve

Achieve is an independent, bipartisan, nonprofit organization created by the nation's governors and corporate leaders to help states improve their schools.

Founded at the 1996 National Education Summit, Achieve assists states in raising academic standards, measuring performance against those standards, holding schools and students accountable for those results, and strengthening public confidence in the education system. Achieve organized the National Education Summits held in 1999 and 2001.

The organization is led by a board of directors composed of six governors and six chief executive officers. Achieve has offices in Washington, D.C., and Cambridge, Mass.

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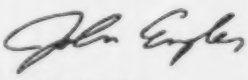
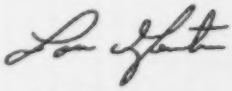
Message From the Chairmen



John Engler

Governor

State of Michigan



Louis V. Gerstner, Jr.

Chairman

IBM Corporation

The 2001 National Education Summit was a sobering, yet heartening, event. It was sobering because it took place less than a month after the attacks of September 11. But the event also was heartening because participants were unified in their beliefs about the urgency of raising academic achievement and the effort needed to accomplish that goal.

Congress and the President share that belief about urgency, and the No Child Left Behind Act signed into law in January 2002 can accelerate the progress of reform. The issues that states must confront as a result range from how to improve and expand testing in ways that align with their standards to how to close the achievement gaps test results uncover.

In its work in 2001, and in its plans for the coming year, Achieve has proven it can serve as an important resource for states and the nation. Achieve expanded its efforts to benchmark standards and accountability policies across the states, working in three states at the forefront of standards-based reform — Maryland, Massachusetts and Texas — while continuing to examine the quality and alignment of standards and tests. The Mathematics Achievement Partnership (MAP) outlined expectations for eighth-grade math that can serve as the foundation for improving instruction and measuring achievement in the 14 participating states. Achieve continued to demonstrate national leadership by helping to organize the Summit. With five states and three other national organizations, Achieve also is establishing a stronger link between high school exit standards and the real world expectations of college and the workplace.

We are encouraged by the commitment shown to date by both governors and business leaders — an essential component of the progress that has been made. Clearly, states must pick the right policies and then implement them fairly and comprehensively, and to their efforts we pledge Achieve's full support and cooperation. Without all of us working together, the growing movement to improve education for all students cannot succeed. There are enormous challenges ahead, but we remain convinced that they can be overcome with sound policies and strong and steadfast leadership. The children of the United States can only benefit as a result.

State Progress on Higher Standards

Achieve has tracked states' progress in raising education standards and achievement since the nation's governors and business leaders created the organization at the 1996 National Education Summit. In five years, the standards movement progressed from a good idea to a reality in virtually every state. And as the movement has matured, the challenges have shifted. The question now is no longer how to put policies in place; it is how to make sure the policies work for all students.

New federal legislation, enacted in January 2002, poses new opportunities for states to enhance and improve their education systems, as well as additional challenges to ensure that they remain strong. Over the next few years, states will have to accelerate their progress and put in place new tests and new policies for holding schools accountable for results.

Evidence of Success

As shown in the NAEP mathematics achievement results below, the percentage of fourth-grade students performing below the basic level has dropped sharply since 1990, from 50 percent to 31 percent, and the percentage of students performing at the proficient level or higher has doubled to 26 percent.

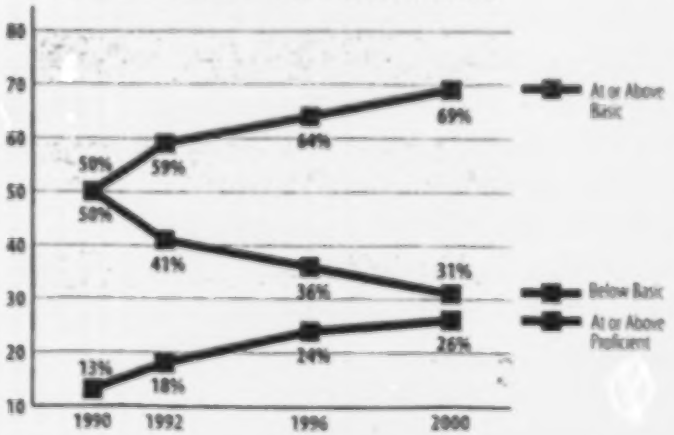
There is widespread evidence that states' efforts to set standards, measure performance and hold schools accountable for results have begun to pay off. Nationally, mathematics performance improved substantially during the 1990s, although it remains lower than it needs to be. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the percentage of eighth graders who performed at the proficient level or higher in math nearly doubled over the decade, to 27 percent, while the proportion of fourth graders who performed below the basic level dropped from 50 percent to 31 percent.

Performance has improved in many states as well. Twenty-seven of 31 states improved their performance on NAEP in math at the eighth grade level since 1990, and performance in reading also has improved over time in some states. In Connecticut, for example, nearly half of fourth graders — 46 percent — read at the proficient level or better in 1998, up from 38 percent four years before. Colorado showed similar gains, moving from 28 percent proficient to 34 percent proficient between 1994 and 1998.

States showed substantial gains on their own tests as well. In Massachusetts, the proportion of 10th graders passing the state's test in English language arts jumped from 66 percent in 2000 to 82 percent in 2001, the first year the test was required for high school graduation. Similarly, in Virginia, the proportion of schools meeting state standards leapt from 2 percent in 1999 to 40 percent in 2001, and another 30 percent appear on target for meeting standards in the next few years.

Districts and schools also registered impressive gains in performance. Eighty-six percent of the country's largest urban school districts increased state test scores in math at all grades tested and 80 percent increased their reading scores in more than half the grades tested. Some urban districts, in fact, now outperform their suburban and rural counterparts. In Albuquerque, Hillsborough County, Fla., and San Francisco, the math scores in every grade were higher than their respective statewide averages.

Fourth-Grade Math Performance



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The Challenges Ahead

The achievement gains states and districts have registered are no accident. They reflect the fact that virtually all states have embraced the standards agenda and have put policies in place that lead to higher achievement. In order to gain a full appreciation of how far states have come, it helps to look back five years to when Achieve was founded: In 1996, only 14 states had a coordinated system of standards and assessments in place to guide their education reform efforts. Today, 49 states do. In 1996, only a handful of states had systems of rewards and incentives to hold schools accountable for performance. Today, nearly all states have some elements of accountability systems in place.

Despite these signs of progress, the achievement data also provide sobering reminders of why the standards agenda needs to continue and to accelerate its progress. Consider the international data. When American fourth graders were tested in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 1995, they ranked fourth and scored well above the global average. Four years later, as eighth graders, U.S. students fell below the international average.

Results from NAEP also show that, despite gains in a few states, American student performance in reading remains stubbornly flat, and that achievement gaps between white and minority students are large.

The data clearly show that the work is far from over. The promise of the standards movement remains unfulfilled.

Many states have more work to do. For example, although states have components of effective accountability systems, only six states have comprehensive systems that include report cards on schools, rewards for high performance, assistance for low-performing schools and sanctions for persistent poor performance.

Moreover, the new federal education law requires states to pick up the pace of reform. Under the law, all states will have to test students annually in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8. They also must put in place systems for identifying low-performing schools, for turning them around and for imposing sanctions if poor performance persists. The law will require aggressive action on the part of many states to shore up their systems so that they help all children reach high standards.

Public Support

As the standards, assessment and accountability policies states have developed have started to take effect, it is understandable that they would draw significant attention — particularly from parents and the media.

Three extensive public opinion surveys undertaken in the last 18 months have delved more deeply the public's support for state policies by examining what Americans — especially parents — think about the push for higher standards, more testing and accountability for results. These surveys from The Business Roundtable, Public Agenda and Educational Testing Service tell the same story: The public, including parents, remains squarely behind the agenda of standards, assessment and accountability.

The surveys also show that much of the so-called "backlash" to standards and accountability represents the criticisms of a small but vocal minority. These critics have managed to hold rallies and attract media attention, but most parents consider their arguments unfounded. For example, fewer than one-fifth of parents surveyed by Public Agenda suggest that teachers focus so much on preparing for tests that real learning is neglected, one of the most persistent claims of critics.

Yet the three surveys — and a separate poll of teachers conducted by *Education Week* — show that Americans have some legitimate concerns about the ways standards and accountability policies have been implemented. They are concerned that standards and tests may not be sending clear signals about learning. They are concerned that accountability systems are punitive, rather than firm and fair. And teachers in particular are concerned that they lack the tools they need to help students succeed. These findings suggest areas states need to address to ensure that educators and the public continue to support standards and accountability systems, and that these systems work for all students.

Achieve is committed to working with state and national leaders to address these challenges. It will take leadership, perseverance and creative thinking. But it can and must be done. There can be no turning back. The stakes are too high — for our young people and for the nation's future.

Benchmarking to the Best

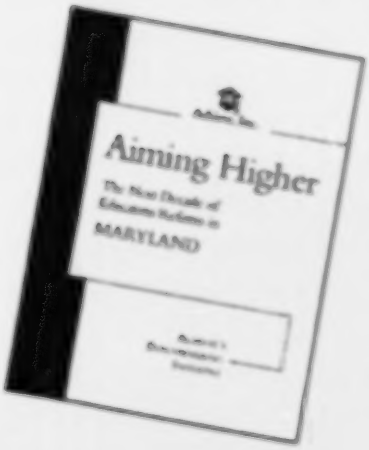
Since its inception, Achieve has sought to help states improve their practices through benchmarking — comparing standards, tests and policies to the best in other states and nations. These external yardsticks show what is possible and how states can adjust policies to produce better results.

Consistent with its mission, Achieve has focused on comparing state standards to the best in the nation and the world, and examining the extent to which state tests measure what the standards expect. Beginning with a pilot project in 1998, Achieve has, at the states' request, examined standards and tests in 12 states and provided ongoing advice and assistance to states that are revising their standards and tests. We also have conducted policy reviews to examine state accountability systems, efforts to build capacity for educators to teach to high standards and ways to engage the public in reform.

Examining Policy's Impact

Maryland, Massachusetts and Texas looked to Achieve for advice on how to move forward at a time when their efforts were entering a new phase.

In 2001, Achieve was asked to review the Maryland, Massachusetts and Texas education reform policies. These states are among the national leaders in carrying out an agenda of standards, testing and accountability. All three undertook significant reforms for which they have attracted a great deal of attention within their own borders and beyond. They asked Achieve to provide independent, objective advice on how to move forward at a time when their efforts were entering their next phases.

Maryland, with a decade-old system of assessments and accountability, was taking stock of its efforts and envisioning its focus for reform in the next 10 years. While the state's signature assessment and its accountability system had won national praise, state officials wanted to be sure that the test was as rigorous as it should be and that the system offered appropriate assistance and incentives for improvement to all schools. The Maryland review came as the state was about to implement new, more challenging high school end-of-course tests for graduation, and officials wanted to be sure the educational infrastructure could support widespread student success on the exams and public acceptance of the new assessments.

Massachusetts also was reaching a critical point in its standards-based reforms. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) had generated considerable controversy within the state and was about to become a high school graduation requirement for the class of 2003. Those students took MCAS for the first time in 2001 as 10th graders. Given the strong opposition, any perceived weaknesses threatened the assessment. State education officials wanted Achieve's recommendations for maintaining and strengthening their system.

Like Maryland, Texas was moving to the next phase of education reform after a decade of raising standards and testing in nearly every grade. The state's results on its own tests and on NAEP had won wide acclaim. In 2001, Texas was poised to raise the bar higher than ever before with the development of new tests for 2003. Texas sought Achieve's help in balancing the implementation of new assessments to drive further progress while maintaining solid support from educators and the public.

Given the high profiles the three states enjoy, the Achieve reviews, published in early 2002, are expected to provide useful lessons to policy makers in other states attempting to adjust standards, assessment and accountability systems to produce higher student achievement.

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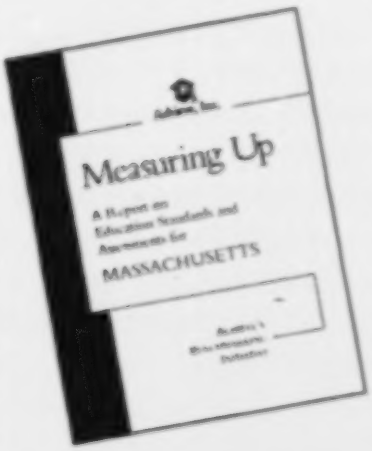
Standards and Assessments

Achieve's report on Massachusetts' standards and assessments was released two days after the state announced that more than three-fourths of its 10th graders had passed MCAS.

Achieve also continued to focus on the quality of standards and tests. In 2001, one request for such an analysis came from one of the most high-profile state programs — Massachusetts. In addition to seeking the review of the policy environment, state officials in Massachusetts wanted an independent analysis of the 10th-grade graduation test that had attracted such intense scrutiny.

The Achieve report, released two days after state officials announced that more than three-fourths of the state's 10th graders had passed the test, found that the Massachusetts exams were of high quality, aligned to state standards, rigorous and reasonable. The review concluded that the standards and tests were among the strongest Achieve has reviewed. The report also suggested ways the state could improve its program, particularly by strengthening the rigor of its math standards.



James Peyser, chair of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, said the report "is an important confirmation of our work and a constructive criticism of how we can do even better." Added Governor Jane Swift: "Achieve's findings are gratifying. Educators across the state are working hard to help students meet these high standards. We need to be able to tell students and parents the standards are reasonable and that the efforts of teachers are worthwhile."

Achieve also began standards-and-assessment benchmarking reviews in two other states, Oklahoma and Tennessee. In Oklahoma, the review is focusing on high school level tests, including the ACT college-admissions test. (Through a joint project between the state and American College Testing, more than two-thirds of Oklahoma high school juniors and seniors take the ACT.) The analysis is part of a broader review of the state's policy environment, which also will focus on Oklahoma's assessment and accountability systems. The Oklahoma and Tennessee reports will be completed in 2002.

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Making Diplomas Matter

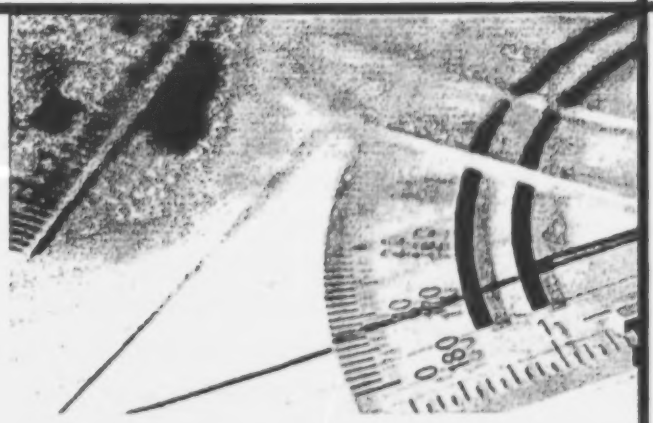
States must be sure that the level of mastery high school students need to attain reflects the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in college and the workplace.

While states are continuing to refine their standards and tests, they face a critical challenge in setting the bar for high school graduation. Nearly half the states currently or soon will require students to pass tests to earn a high school diploma. States must be sure that the level of mastery students need to attain reflects the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and the workplace.

The issue has far-reaching implications. Aligning high school standards and tests with college admission and employment will make them far more meaningful to students and parents. And that, in turn, will change the debate over the tests: They will be viewed less as "exit exams" and more as exams that open doors of opportunity for young people.

To help states work through this important issue, Achieve in 2001 teamed up with three other national organizations — The Education Trust, the National Alliance of Business and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation — to launch an initiative to assist states in determining the appropriate place to set the bar for high school graduation and in using high school assessments for college admissions and hiring. The American Diploma Project, funded by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, will conduct research to analyze the gaps between standards for high school and those for college admissions and placement; commission studies of the skill requirements in fast-growing, high-performance jobs with strong prospects for growth over the next decade; and review the legal issues surrounding the use of standards-based achievement data in admissions and hiring practices. Through a competitive application process, five states — Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nevada and Texas — were selected to work with the project over the next two years to close the gap between high school standards and entry requirements in higher education and the workplace.

States Working Together to Raise Achievement



The TIMSS benchmarking report released in 2001 provided a troubling reminder of the need for American schools to strengthen education in math. As part of the study, several U.S. states and school districts participated as if they were nations. While eighth graders in some affluent school districts performed near the world's best, states clumped near the lackluster U.S. national average, with none performing significantly better than the nation as a whole. The most alarming finding was that students in a few participating urban school districts registered performances close to the worst internationally.

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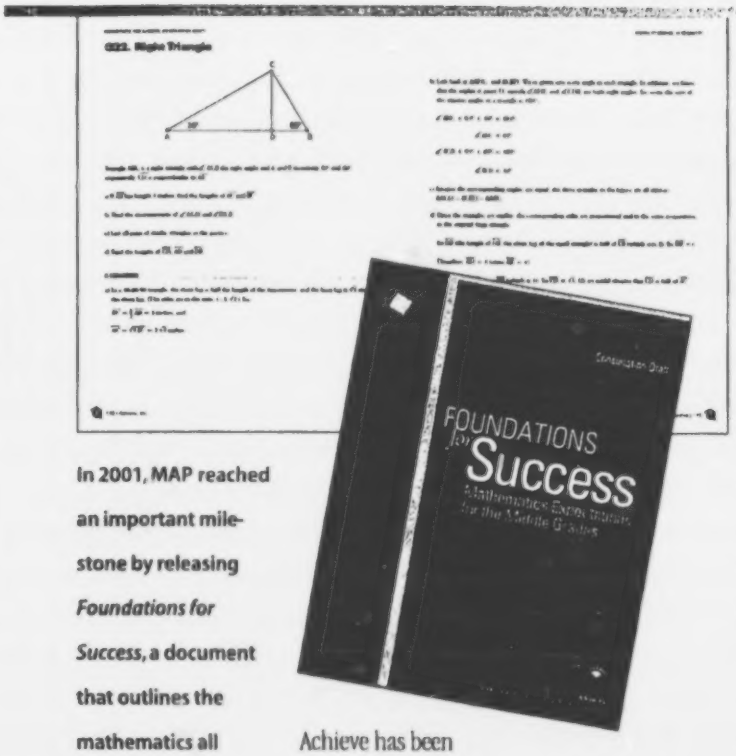

In 2001, MAP reached an important milestone by releasing *Foundations for Success*, a document that outlines the mathematics all students should learn in the middle grades.

Achieve has been working to improve math education in the middle grades in the United States through a collaborative effort known as the Mathematics Achievement Partnership (MAP). In 2001, California, Georgia and Oregon joined the 11 founding states — Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin — in their commitment to providing high-quality math instruction to their students. These 14 states have been working together to create tools — world-class standards, high-quality training and curriculum support, and an eighth-grade test — that will help states strengthen math instruction and raise achievement.

In 2001, MAP reached an important milestone by releasing *Foundations for Success*, a document that outlines the math all students should learn in the middle grades. The expectations laid out in the report are the outcome of extensive efforts by Achieve's Mathematics Advisory Panel, a diverse group of university mathematicians, math educators, and state and local supervisors of math education. The expectations are intended to serve as guides for the development of curriculum and professional development programs.

"We cheat American eighth graders if all we expect of them is what they themselves call 'dummy math,' while students around the world get algebra and geometry," said Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., Achieve's co-chair and chairman of IBM. "These are the foundation skills our kids need to succeed in college and at work. These math expectations agreed upon by the states and the teaching and testing tools that will be developed from them will, at long last, give our children a chance at a world-class math education."

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Collaborative Effort

MAP truly is a collaborative effort. Representatives from the participating states worked together to help produce *Foundations for Success*, and states in turn will be able to use the assessment when it is available to provide information on how students perform against the expectations and compare performances across states — information current tests cannot provide.

Governor John Engler of Michigan, Achieve's co-chair, noted that the collaboration will be particularly important over the next few years, as new federal legislation will require states to develop hundreds of new tests in order to have in place annual reading and math tests in grades 3 through 8. "It is imperative that states pool their intellectual and political capital to fashion the improvements we all must make to raise achievement in our schools," Governor Engler said. "The math partnership is a model for collaboration."

MAP also represents a collaboration between Achieve and other organizations that provide expertise and additional resources. The partnership is working with organizations such as the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh, LessonLab and the Grow Network.

Next Steps

Over the next year, MAP will build on *Foundations for Success* by working to develop the other components that are part of the MAP package. Specifically, the partnership will:

- analyze professional development programs to determine their match with MAP criteria and design prototypes for professional development in middle-grades math;
- analyze major textbooks to determine their alignment with *Foundations for Success*, and make recommendations to states about appropriate curriculum materials; and
- create a design guide to help states align tests with MAP's expectations and begin development of an eighth-grade test that participating states can administer.

Standards Database

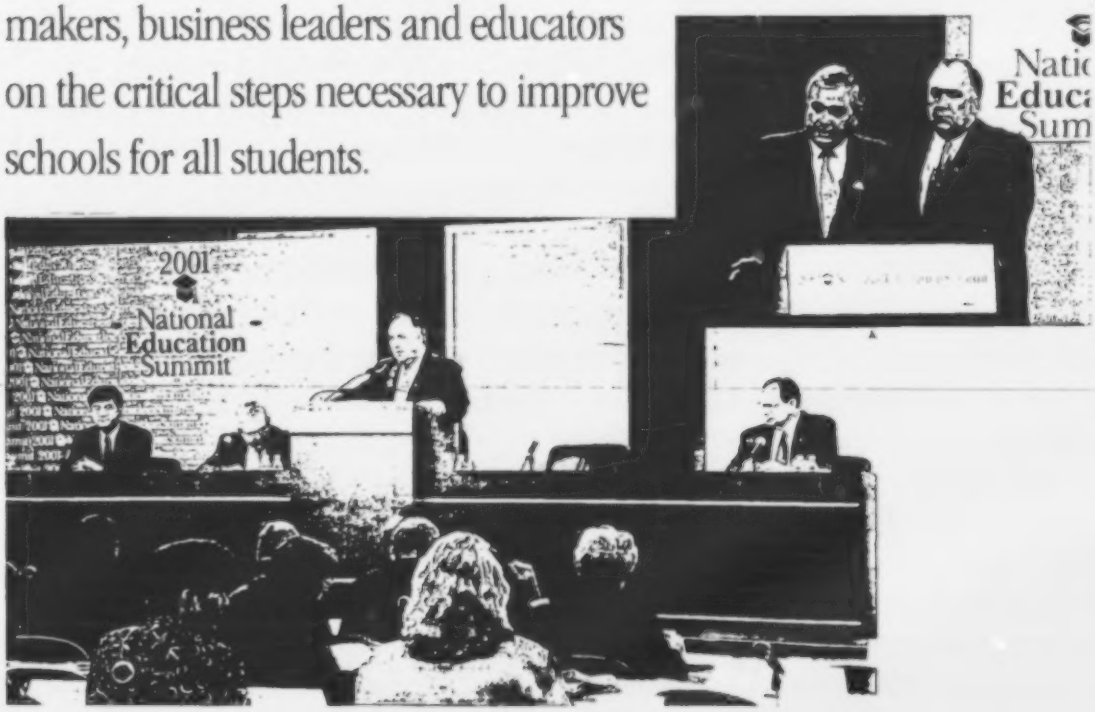
One of Achieve's first projects, its Standards Database, underwent a significant transition in 2001. One of Achieve's original goals was to serve as a clearinghouse for information on standards-based reform, providing information in a useful form for states. Toward that goal, Achieve early on created a database of state standards that provided for the first time a means for users to see and compare standards across states. The unique feature of the database was a common framework, which enabled users to look across standards and to compare what two different states expect of their students in the same subject area.

Over the past four years, Achieve has invested in the database to make it increasingly useful. Recently, the database has attracted considerable attention from states and private publishers who are interested in producing curriculum materials that align to state standards. To expand the database to meet this need, Achieve's Board of Directors agreed in 2001 to spin it off into a new, nonprofit corporation that could devote its energies and investments to building a technological tool that will help bring standards into the classroom. In October 2001, the spin-off was complete.

Providing Public Leadership

Achieve has focused consistently on providing national leadership to help sustain the movement to raise standards and achievement in America's schools. For example, Achieve sponsored the 1999 National Education Summit, which brought together governors and business and education leaders to continue the push for higher standards and performance.

In 2001, Achieve enhanced its public leadership role. Most notably, Achieve sponsored another National Education Summit to accelerate the pace of reform and focus the attention of policy makers, business leaders and educators on the critical steps necessary to improve schools for all students.



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2001 National Education Summit

The three prior education Summits — in 1989, 1996 and 1999 — were instrumental in creating and sustaining political momentum and public support for the drive to raise standards and improve performance in our nation's schools. Yet Achieve's Board of Directors recognized that another Summit would be necessary to help states move forward.

The 2001 National Education Summit took place at a critical time. Held October 9 and 10, it began just a few weeks after the tragic attacks in New York City and Washington. Although the nation's attention was properly focused on responding to those tragedies, the Summit organizers never considered canceling the event or altering the agenda of raising standards and achievement — an issue that remained vital to the national interest. As Governor Engler, who co-chaired the Summit, put it: "We want to secure ourselves from enemies external and internal. Ignorance, lack of knowledge, poorly developed skills — these are the kind of internal enemies we can do something about."

The Summit took place at a time when the standards movement faced some important tests. Despite the overwhelming public support for state reforms, some states encountered resistance as accountability policies began to take hold.

The Summit also took place at a time when the standards movement faced some important tests. Despite the overwhelming public support for state reforms, some states encountered resistance as accountability policies began to take hold. The need for the right policies — implemented fairly and with broad public support — was particularly acute in fall 2001.

In addition, the Summit took place as members of Congress were debating legislation aimed at stepping up the pace of reforms in testing and accountability. Although the final product was not signed until January 2002, the Summit participants were aware that the law would challenge states to expand their testing and accountability systems, intervene in chronically low-performing schools, and close the achievement gap that continues to separate the advantaged and disadvantaged.

To help states address these challenges, Achieve brought together governors, business leaders and educators at the IBM Executive Conference Center at Palisades, N.Y., the site of the 1996 and 1999 Summits. This time, the participants also included principals and classroom teachers. The Summit organizers recognized that many of the next steps in raising standards and achievement will take place in schools and classrooms, as teachers implement stronger curricula and instructional programs to help all students reach challenging standards. The teachers and principals who participated in the Summit came from schools across the country that have demonstrated how high standards can lead to better results. What emerged from the Summit deliberations was a

Teachers and principals who participated in the Summit came from schools across the country that have demonstrated how high high standards can lead to better results.

strong, unanimous commitment to develop better tests, establish fair and firm accountability systems, and improve teaching as states continue to raise academic standards. In a six-page Statement of Principles, adopted by acclamation, the participants laid out a set of guidelines for state action in these three areas and pledged to adhere to them. Perhaps more importantly, the participants also committed themselves to the goals the principles aim for: raising standards and achievement for all students. "We must raise achievement for all students while closing the achievement gap separating the educational 'haves' from the 'have-nots,'" the Summit closing statement read. "These goals are an irreducible educational minimum for the United States. Nothing less than their full attainment will serve the nation's social, democratic and economic interests."

Leadership and Advocacy

Launched to coincide with the 2001 Summit, the new Achieve Web site features a wealth of information on Achieve's services and publications.

In addition to organizing the National Education Summit, Achieve stepped up efforts to provide public leadership in other ways as well. The most far-reaching effort was a redesign of the Achieve Web site to provide comprehensive and timely information to policy makers, educators and the public about state policies and practices around standards, assessment and accountability.

Launched to coincide with the 2001 Summit, the new Achieve Web site features a wealth of information on Achieve's services and publications, as well as links to timely and informative news articles about relevant topics.

But its most innovative features are new sections: Call to Action and Policy Tips.

Call to Action outlines the arguments for raising standards and measuring performance. It is designed to arm education advocates with the data they need to make informed and intelligent decisions, and to enact bold measures to ensure our students are given the education and the opportunities they deserve.

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The most innovative features of the new Achieve Web site: a Call to Action section and a Policy Tips page. Below, Achieve's policy brief on standards.

Policy Tips provides highlights of strategies that can help policy makers design and refine their states' policies. Currently, the site features tips on effective testing policies and accountability systems. Other topics will be added in 2002.

In addition to expanding and improving the Web site, Achieve in 2001 continued to create publications to inform and assist policy makers and practitioners at the national, state and local levels. The Achieve series of Policy Briefs, launched in 2000, continued with a publication that examines the challenges states face in setting the bar for high school graduation and

efforts they are taking to meet that challenge, as well as another brief looking at state efforts to turn around low-performing schools.

National Forums

To help state and district leaders take stock of their standards and accountability systems and confront the challenges they face in improving them, Achieve in April 2001 teamed up with the members of the State Education Improvement Partnership, a consortium of national organizations, to hold a national forum. The forum drew 135 participants from 35 states. The participants celebrated the success of standards in raising achievement in many schools, and they discussed what is needed to make such improvements a reality for every student.

Among the challenges the participants addressed were improving teacher quality, providing academic support for struggling students, improving tests to ensure they measure what standards expect, strengthening accountability and sustaining public support.

Achieve is working with other organizations to prepare another forum on how states can build the capacity of schools and teachers to help students reach challenging standards. That forum is scheduled for March 2002.

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New Challenges, New Opportunities

Over the next year, Achieve will be intensifying its work with states to help them meet the challenges they face in building and improving their standards and accountability systems. Using the 2001 National Education Summit Statement of Principles as a framework, we will be tracking state progress, casting a searchlight to identify promising practices and making information widely available about what states can do to improve their systems.

States face enormous pressure to accelerate their progress. The new federal law will only intensify their efforts. Yet as states move forward, it is imperative that they implement the right policies — policies with a proven track record that will truly bring all students to high standards.

Raising the bar and closing the achievement gap are not easy. Achieve stands committed to working with states as they move forward in these endeavors. We will work to share the best thinking and practical experience so that states can strengthen their programs and policies while sustaining the support of parents, educators and the public. The success some states have shown so far demonstrates what is possible. The challenge is making it a reality everywhere.

2001 National Education Summit

2001 National Education Summit Statement of Principles

Measuring Results:

- ***Quality.*** Tests should measure student performance against standards and measure the full range of standards.
- ***Transparency.*** Students, parents and teachers should know what is tested.
- ***Utility.*** Test results should be clear, accessible and designed to guide action.
- ***Comparability.*** Results should track student progress against standards from year to year.
- ***Coherence.*** States and districts should ensure that all tests serve a distinct purpose and the overall amount of testing is reasonable.
- ***Strategic Use of Data.*** Test results should enable schools and school systems to direct resources appropriately.

Firm and Fair Accountability:

- ***Adequate Phase-In.*** States need to allow a reasonable amount of time (not forever) for schools to implement new curricula and train teachers before attaching consequences to results.
- ***Assistance Before Intervention.*** States should provide targeted assistance to low-performing schools before intervening more drastically.
- ***Flexibility in School Schedules.*** Students who need the most help need extra time and academic support.
- ***Sanctions.*** States should take dramatic action if low-performing schools fail to improve.
- ***Shared Accountability.*** Responsibility should not fall disproportionately on a single group — students, educators, administrators, policy makers.
- ***Alignment with College Admissions and Employment.*** Performance on state tests should count for college placement and employment decisions to provide students with stronger incentives to achieve.

Improving Teaching:

- ***Recruitment and Preparation.*** States should attract teachers from a wide range of sources and ensure that they are able to teach to high standards.
- ***Tools and Support.*** Teachers need access to high-quality curriculum materials and professional development.
- ***Compensation.*** Teacher salaries should be competitive and tied to skills and performance.
- ***Matching Strengths to Need.*** The most capable teachers should work with students who need the most help.

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Financials

	2001	2000
Beginning Cash Balance	**639,289**	**500,208**
Revenues		
Contributions	5,052,909	2,799,833
Fees for Services	236,725	314,601
Interest Income	34,442	10,637
Total	**5,324,076**	**3,125,071**
Expenses		
Benchmarking Initiative	710,410	1,003,949
Mathematics Achievement Partnership	402,201	363,040
Standards Database and Web Site	909,170	289,433
Public Leadership	720,364	436,021
American Diploma Project	22,459	—
General and Administrative	987,115	893,547
Total	**3,751,719**	**2,985,990**
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	1,572,357	139,081
End-of-Year Cash Balance	**2,211,646**	**639,289**

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